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“[A] fascinating overview of an unexplored topic.”
~ *Publishers Weekly*

**SEPTEMBER SONGS:
THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT MARRIAGE
IN THE LATER YEARS
By Maggie Scarf**

“There is a special kind of wisdom that comes with age. Maggie Scarf wonderfully captures those insights that give meaning and joy to life even as the clock ticks. This is a book that can inspire old and young alike.”
~ Jerome Groopman, M.D., author of *How Doctors Think*

In the course of the last century, something akin to a miracle has occurred: Some 25 to 30 years have been added to the human life-span. For people born in 1900, average life expectancy was under fifty years; now it hovers close to age eighty. Today’s adults are experiencing a whole new stage of the life-cycle -- the years after their children have left home and before the onset of old age -- and, more often than not, they are experiencing these bonus years along with their mates.

How do these extra years change marriage? This provocative question is at the heart of Maggie Scarf’s groundbreaking new book, **SEPTEMBER SONGS: The Good News about Marriage in the Later Years** (Riverhead; September 4, 2008; \$24.95). Scarf, a well-known journalist and author based at Yale’s Whitney Humanities Center, interviewed couples who have been married for more than two decades and unearthed surprising news about how these partners remained married, weathered rough times and came to enjoy the benefits of their long term commitments to each other.

Through extensive, in-depth interviews with a range of couples between 50 to 70 years of age (some of whom were interviewed for her best-selling book on younger mates, *Intimate Partners: Patterns in Love and Marriage*), Scarf explores the ways in which these partners managed to keep their relationships intact; and how they confronted various issues such as the empty nest, retirement,

relocation, financial and health concerns. A testament to this author's skills is the way in which the men and women she interviewed opened up to her, and spoke frankly about the intimate details of their lives -- about sex; about the smartest and dumbest decisions they'd ever made; about fears of the loss of the spouse, and about the regrets and disappointments as well as the surprises and joys that time's passage had brought to them.

Scarf had expected to hear about how difficult life was for these couples who were no longer young, but still not old -- to hear about health issues, waning sex lives, worries about relocation, finances and the like. But to her surprise she found that her interviewees were happier than they had ever been when were young. They were far more in touch with their emotional selves, more relaxed about gender roles, more accepting of their partners' quirks -- in short, more positive about their marriages and their lives.

This book brings welcome news to a society obsessed with fears about aging. Scarf found that the people she interviewed are engaged with the world, in general good health and enjoying a general sense of well-being. They are far more focused on finding emotional satisfaction in their close relationships than in making it in the world of success and achievement. The couples she interviewed show a poignant appreciation of time -- a deep realization that the years left to live are fewer than the years that have already gone by.

SEPTEMBER SONGS also looks at some of the latest research on divorce and its effects on emotional well-being. The scientific work she cites support her finding that those couples who have managed to stay together through difficult times are profoundly happier in their marriages now, and grateful that they kept their relationships together.

In this uplifting book, Scarf brings all of her formidable skills as an interviewer, researcher and writer, to provide a wise and inspiring look at the nature of commitment and the pleasures that can await us in our later years. A compelling and eye-opening work, **SEPTEMBER SONGS** brings welcome, wholly unexpected news to committed partners at any phase of their lives.

Maggie Scarf is a journalist and the author of the bestselling *Intimate Partners*, as well as *Secrets, Lies, Betrayals; Intimate Worlds; Unfinished Business; and Body, Mind, Behavior*. She is a visiting fellow at the Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University, and a fellow of Jonathan Edwards College, Yale University. She is a contributing editor for *The New Republic*. She and her husband of 55 years live in Connecticut.

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Riverhead Books

Publication date: September 4, 2008

ISBN: 978-1-59448-850-4

Price: \$24.95

Visit the author's website: www.maggiescarf.com